

March 22, 2016

History-Social Science Subject Matter Committee
Instructional Quality Commission
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Room 1101
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Members of the History-Social Science Subject Matter Committee:

We would like to appeal to your Committee and members of the Instructional Quality Commission to reconsider the recommendations that were made by the Bataan Legacy Historical Society to the revised history curriculum framework that you are preparing for approval by the California State Board of Education in May.

America's interests and influence in the Philippines prior to World War II dates back to the Spanish-American war in 1898 when it was ceded to the U.S. for \$20M (with Guam and Puerto Rico) under the terms of the Treaty of Paris. This made the U.S. a world power in Asia that solidified an enduring relationship between the U.S. and Philippines. This also allowed the U.S. to establish and maintain a military force for the purpose of defending the Philippines and United States against any incursion against its borders. Hence, the need to defend the United States and its possessions against the Japanese threat in WWII.

World War II in the Philippines is very much a seminal part of America's history. The stories of thousands of Filipino and American soldiers are America's stories and how they contributed to the America's greatness. The importance of teaching the history of war in the Philippines -- its impact on the economic, social, political, humanitarian needs, and reconstruction of the country, and the responsibility of the United States to provide the resources so that students can learn the history between the U.S. and its colonial possession.

We have spent our careers in the service of the U.S. Army--totaling nearly 110 years. Our fathers and uncles fought during World War II in the Philippines, particularly in the Battles of Bataan and Corregidor as part of the Filipino forces under the command of General Douglas MacArthur and the U.S. Army Forces in the Far East. They endured unimaginable hardships in the service of the United States and the Philippine Commonwealth to bring the freedom that we are all enjoying today. Despite suffering from massive disease and starvation as a result of the Europe First Policy, they were able to disrupt the timetable of the Imperial Japanese Army of 52 days and held the peninsula of Bataan for 99 days. This delay enabled the Allied Forces to harness the necessary resources that eventually led to their victory.

We thank you for placing World War II in the Philippines in the Grade 11 history curriculum framework in California. However, in doing so, we must take great pride in teaching this period of history to thousands of students in California. We must present the unvarnished facts based on actual accounts by those who were in the war in the Philippines.

Ms Cecilia Gaerlan, Executive Director of Bataan Legacy Historical Society has used military books, analyses of WWII events in the Philippines based on those who fought during the war (used as teaching materials at the U.S. Army Infantry School in Fort Benning, Naval War College in Rhode Island, etc.) as well as actual combat reports by American commanding officers during the war in Bataan and Corregidor in her Bataan Legacy presentation. These materials have been posted on Bataan Legacy Historical Society's website. She has written a comprehensive narrative that puts the war in the Philippines against the backdrop of what was happening in Asia and even in Europe years before Pearl Harbor was bombed. Her narrative even goes back to 1897 when the U.S. and Japan vied for the Hawaiian Islands, until the Philippines was granted independence in 1946 by the United States. She has presented Bataan Legacy to schools, organizations and even veterans groups not only in California but throughout the United States and even in the Philippines. She has organized events and conferences about WWII in the Philippines that featured actual veterans of the war and civilian survivors. Many of these stories are just beginning to be learned by the public.

We cannot discount the legacy and educational value in what is being proposed in AB199. We are asking you to reconsider the recommendations by Bataan Legacy Historical Society and community advocates on the history curriculum framework. We owe a debt of gratitude to the noble men and women - Americans and Filipinos who fought for our liberty and future in this country. We owe it to future generations of Americans and Filipinos to learn the interminable cost of the price of freedom.

Thank you for your consideration

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Oscar B. Hilman".

Brig. Gen. (Retired) Oscar Hilman

cc: History–Social Science Subject Matter Committee (SMC) Members

- Lauryn Wild, Commission Chair
- Louis “Bill” Honig, SMC Chair
- Risha Krishna, SMC Vice Chair
- Jose Flores
- Marlene Galvan
- Nicole Naditz
- Carlos Ulloa

Executive Director

- Thomas Adams

State Board of Education Liaisons

- Patricia Rucker
- Niki Sandoval